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*Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi*

JANUARY 2000

## JANUARY HAPPENINGS

The January meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held at noon on Thursday, January 20 at the Kate Lobrano House, 108 Cue Street, Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi.

Our speaker will be Russell Barnes who will give us a wonderful peek into our past with his presentation of the history boat-building in Hancock County. Our economy depended on these boats and ships for its existence and few of us realize how extensive this industry was.

Call 467-4090 for reservations at \$6.00. Please call early to help us plan food and seating. Thank you.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last year our attention was on the tercentenary and the celebration of our three hundred years of existence. The festivities were outstanding and can be forever remembered through a visit to Tercentenary Park. The exemplary work of our current historian, Charles Gray, was acknowledged, when on January 7, 2000, he was the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce recipient of the Outstanding Citizen of the Year. Congratulations Charles!

This year's goal is to increase the activity of the membership and proceed with the progress made in recent years. One of our main areas of interest is in recording and preserving the rich history of our area. Please take time to contact Charles or Karen and donate some of your time to the society. I hope to see you at the Lobrano House soon.

Brehm Bell



TYPICAL COSTUME OF  
THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV

## ELEGANCE IN THE COLONY

In 1725 Louis IV replaced Jean Baptiste LeMoyne de Bienville as Louisiana's governor with Boucher de la Perier. Lacking Bienville's diplomacy in dealing with Indian tribes, Perier's rule was marked by frequent raids from Indians outraged at his brutality towards them. Perier's replacement was the Marquis de Vaudreuil, a rich gentleman of the French court who had little interest or talent for fighting Indian wars.

Vaudreuil established a sort of court, with balls, court dress, gaily uniformed officers and jeweled women, marking the

beginning of fashionable life in the colony. His regime introduced the first theatrical entertainment and also the first dancing master, "Baby." Vaudreuil brought Baby from Paris to New Orleans to instruct the colonial children in the art of dancing. But fate led Baby to a comic death in the wilderness.

*E d i t h*

*Back*

The following is from Lyle Saxon's account of plantation life in the colony:

## BABY

Here he was, a canary in a nest of jaybirds, a butterfly in an ant-hill. New Orleans was a rough village, surrounded by a wooden palisade. Within its walls was a motley crew of Frenchmen, Swiss and Germans; a sprinkling of priests; a group of nuns; a sorry lot of abandoned aristocrats, trailing their bedraggled velvets through the muddy streets; men from jails and prisons of France; a few courtezans, now the industrious and respectable wives of colonists; and many plain bourgeois shopkeepers, wig-makers, laborers, and artisans, and their hard-working wives.

Separate from them were the officers and their wives, and also the rich planters who had come from France with enough money to invest heavily in land and slaves. These formed the official society, and it was their children that Baby had come to teach.

But pickings were poor for dancing masters, and the children of the rich were few and far between. So Baby did what he could. He taught the rich, but he also taught the poor to dance. He became a dancer in cafes and cabarets.



ground...He was tall and thin and sallow, with twinkling gray eyes. His legs were unusually long and he walked with an airy grace through mud puddles, as though he were ready to dance the minuet. The eccentricities of Baby's mind as well as those of his body made him a well-known figure in the colony. He was called "the Don Quixote of dancing."

Baby's fame spread to the outlying plantations of the German Coast, and the planters offered the dancing master both hospitality and monetary reward if he would come sometimes to their plantations in order to instruct their children. So Baby sallied forth on his little mule. At first he was timorous, and went only to those plantations nearby, but in time he went further and further afield.

The Indians were still giving trouble, in fact at no time since the colony's foundation had the incursion of Indians been more harassing to the planters.

One day a party of Indians made their appearance at the plantation of a man called Cheval, seized the guns of a number of Frenchmen and slaves who were working in the fields, and entered the planter's dwelling. The men in the field, finding themselves defenseless, ran for their boats and crossed the Mississippi to safety on the other side...

The Indians took what they wanted from the house and set it on fire. Then they headed toward the next plantation. The trail led through the wilderness. Well pleased with themselves and their spoils, the Indians halted among thick trees to prepare for their attack on the dwelling just ahead.

As they stood there, they heard a strange sound which came nearer and nearer. It was a man's voice singing, and the song was a gay chanson of far-away Paris. It was Baby, the dancing master, riding to the plantation to give a lesson. On he came through the checkered shade, toward the spot where the savages lay hidden.

From the thicket the Indians peered out, surprised by what they saw. Baby was dressed in his best, a suit of shiny

green cloth of fashionable cut. He wore an immense gray beaver hat, and held himself as majestically as though he were ready to bow. He was riding upon his diminutive mule, and his long legs almost touched the ground. He wore long, sharp spurs of glittering Spanish silver and carried an enormous red umbrella, open to protect himself and his mule from the sun.

The Indians, after their first surprise, ran out with deafening whoops, determined to kill the man and steal the mule. The undertaking appeared easy,

But here they were mistaken.

Baby had no weapon but a hunting knife, and it is doubtful that he had ever struck a blow before. But now, confronted by the Indians, he put up a valiant fight. His thin arm brandished the knife with astonishing rapidity, and his long legs, firm and muscled with years of ballet dancing, kicked right and left. The thorn-like spurs tore the flesh of the Indians nearest him as he kicked at their most vulnerable parts. His voice rose to a falsetto shriek as he kicked with all his might and the cries of the Indians became yells of pain. They took to their heels.

Baby had been wounded but his legs were still of service to him. He ran like the wind. Ahead of him lay the house where he had intended to give a lesson, and he bounded toward it. The Indians, recovering themselves, took after him but he managed to reach the door.

The cottage belonged to a young man named Guillaume, and he had with him ten or twelve little girls and boys, both white and black, whom he had assembled so that Baby might teach them to dance. These children, and young Guillaume, had been forgotten when the rest of the population took to their boats; and as the house was remote, they had known nothing of the attack by the Indians. But now with blood-smeared Baby on the doorstep, they realized that they were fighting for their lives. Guillaume dragged the dancing master inside and barred the door. The cabin

was stoutly built and the windows were closed by heavy batten blinds. Although Guillaume and Baby had but one gun between them and little ammunition, they defended themselves so well and killed so many of the Indians that the savages retreated into the wilderness, carrying their dead with them.

But Baby had received his death wound. All night long the young man and the children ministered to him. And early the next day a wagon was procured and he was taken back to New Orleans. He died before sunset, laughing in his delirium because he thought himself back in his beloved Paris. It is said that every child in New Orleans attended his funeral.

Reference: Saxon, Lyle, *Old Louisiana*, 1988 edition, Pelican Publishing Co., Gretna, La.

## ROSEBUSH DONATED

Jim Brieger, the author of one of our most-used books, *Hometown Mississippi, an Early Settlement History of Over 3300 Places in the State*, and his wife Dot visited the Society recently and brought us a delightful present.

Mrs. Brieger is descended from Christian Koch, the famous ship owner/captain who lived near Logtown. Captain Koch's diary of his travels from his homeland, Denmark, include a mention of a plant he brought with him when he sailed to America as a very young boy.

His homestead near the Pearl River was named Bogue Homa. The house was moved to Louisiana when NASA came to the county but the moss rose bush had reached the enormous proportions of about 12 feet in diameter with long cascading canes. Mrs. Brieger tells us that the blooms are pink and resemble carnations. We are anxious for the plant to grow large enough to bloom.

This bush will join our incredible collection of more than a dozen old garden roses that the *Gather Ye Rosebuds* society planted for us a couple of years ago. One of their bushes has grown along our north fence and trails along the roof-edge of the house. All the bushes bloom on a regular cycle several times a year and some are seldom without blossoms.



## HCHS ELECTION RESULTS

Four new members for the Board of Directors of the Hancock County Historical Society were installed on December 9, 1999. They are: Brehm Bell, President; Ruth Carlson, Secretary; Marine Collins, 2nd Vice President; and Charles Gray, Historian. Continuing in office for their second year are: Roland Schexnayder and Ames Kergosien, Co-1st Vice Presidents; Meg Hilliker, Treasurer; Marlene Johnson, Membership Chairman and Edith Back, Publicity Chairman.

## LIVE OAKS REGISTERED

Live oak trees in Hancock County have been registered since 1973, first by Ocean Springs Garden Club, next by the Bay Waveland Garden Club and since 1993 by the Hancock County Historical Society. Only 142 trees have been registered. Many more trees are eligible. The trees that are registered are at least 100 years old. Some of the trees that were here to greet Bienville 300 years ago are:

- 707 Hancock Street, Bay St. Louis,  
*Oak of Grace and Glory.*
- 308 St. John St. Bay St. Louis,  
*Maurigi's Oak.*
- 640 N. Beach, Bay Saint Louis,  
*Pops Eagan.*
- 127 Rail Road Ave., Bay St. Louis,  
*Al-Jan-Zoe.*
- 119 Citizen St., Bay St. Louis,  
*Blacksmith Oak.*
- 335 Carre Court, Bay St. Louis,  
*Breeland Oak.*
- 322 Jeff Davis, Blvd., Waveland,  
*Marcella Vogel Bradley.*
- 502 Jeff Davis Blvd., Waveland,  
*Lizana Oak.*
- 11192 Oak St., Bayou Lacroix,  
*The Climbing Oak.*
- 1119 Oak St., Bayou Lacroix,  
*Twin Oaks Lauly.*
- 1119 Oak St., Bayou Lacroix,  
*Twin Oaks Jerry.*

These trees are all on private property. **Please, No Trespassing.** There are many beautiful live oak trees throughout Bay Saint Louis and Waveland. Deserving particular mention are the oaks trees in and around Annunciation Church in Kiln, Mississippi, as well as the oaks

around Our Lady of the Gulf church in Bay St. Louis. There are many beautiful unregistered trees in Pearllington and Lakeshore and many other areas in the county.

All Trees that are registered since 1993 should have plaques. Any one having a registered tree that doesn't have a plaque can obtain one for \$10.00.

The general requirements for registering a tree are:

The tree must be a Live Oak at least 100 years old. (36 inches in diameter).

The tree must have a responsible sponsor. (Property owner, municipal council, corporation CEO, ETC.)

The tree must be given a name.

Cost - \$15.00. Make checks to Hancock County Historical Society.

Contact Tree Chairman,

Captain Irwin L. Cucullu

Phone [228] 467-6252

## VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM

Now that the Tercentenary is past and the Tercentenary Park is (nearly) complete, it is time to return to our task of recording the history of Hancock County.

Charles Gray, the new Historian for the society, is asking for volunteers to help on Mondays and Thursdays, to better file the thousands of documents that we have collected. This involves making new file folders, removing duplicate files, making Xerox copies of damaged paperwork, and arranging documents within the files by date.

Other areas where help is needed include telephoning, house keeping, gardening, researching and that dreaded (non-word) "computering."

Please come by on Monday or Thursday at any hour, for any length of time, and help us.

## New members

- Leslie Lionnet, Diamondhead, MS
- T. Carol Cieutat, Bay St. Louis, MS
- Beverly Potts, Metairie, LA
- Rubie Harris, Bay St. Louis, MS
- Tim Morris, Kiln, MS
- Donna Miller, Bay St. Louis, MS
- Ennis Johnson, Long Beach, MS
- Mrs. Ennis Johnson, Long Beach, MS
- Kathleen H. Asher, BSL, MS
- Maureen Waddel, Waveland, MS
- Mosette Winn, Poplarville, MS
- David Price, Hattiesburn, MS
- Audie Murphy, Bay St. Louis, MS
- Joan Murphy, Bay St. Louis, MS
- Frank Kiefer, Jr., Beaumont, TX
- Mrs. Frank Kiefer, Jr., Beaumont, TX
- Elaine Favre Cestone, Woodville, MS
- Patricia Saik, Bay St. Louis, MS
- James Phares, McNeill, MS
- Barbara Redding, Bay St. Louis, MS
- Ernest Serpas, Biloxi, MS
- Ed Streeter, Diamondhead, MS
- Mary Streeter, Diamondhead, MS
- Berlon Lee, Picayune, MS
- Linda Lines, Diamondhead, MS
- Robert Lacoste, Metairie, LA
- Amy Corr, Bay St. Louis, MS
- Kerry Corr, Bay St. Louis, Ms

## LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY	8 a.m.
through	to
FRIDAY	4 p.m.

## THE

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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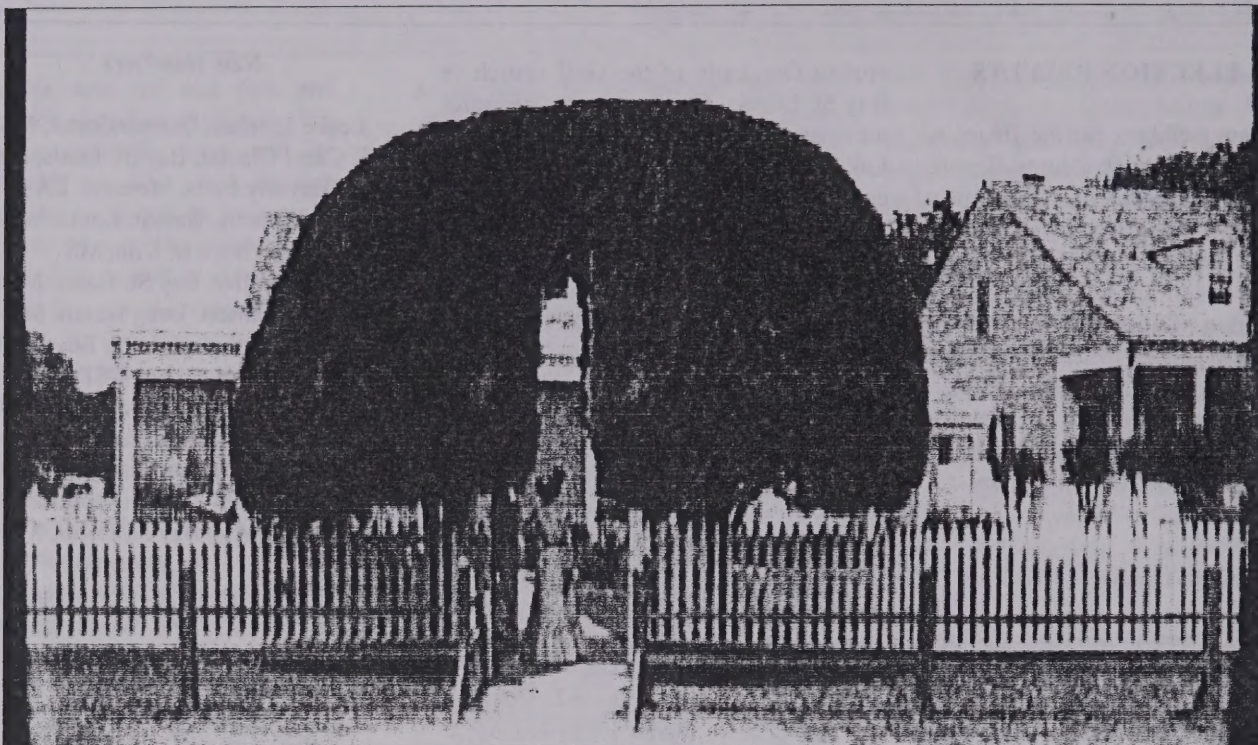
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Do you know this house? The photograph was retrieved from the Library of Congress and lists the name HAMILTON'S GATE, BAY SAINT LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI. It is a post card from about 1905.

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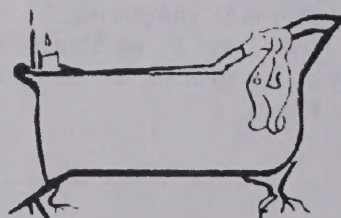
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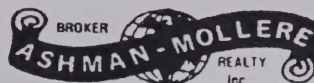
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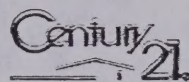
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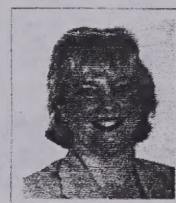
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